



IN RETROSPECT

Faye Fuchs

In Retrospect 1954-1955

*The first official publication of
the students of*

*Stern College For Women
Yeshiva University*

253 Lexington Ave.

New York 16, N. Y.

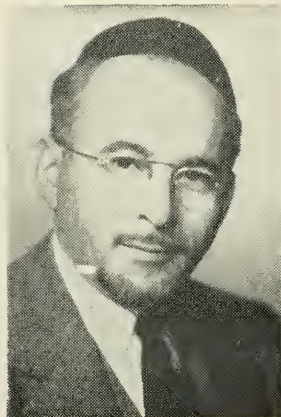
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TO THE STUDENT BODY OF STERN COLLEGE:

As you are about ready to complete your freshman year at Stern College, I wish to extend to you my heartiest congratulations for having had the vision to register in the first class of our new college for women, for your original faith in its ultimate success and for your patience with us during the year when unavoidable disturbance took place because of the extensive alteration of the building. At the same time, you were privileged to witness with your own eyes, the gradual process of translating a dream into reality, and derive the great satisfaction of being pioneers in a great academic enterprise which, in my judgment, will in the near future, have the most salutary effect on Jewish womanhood in America.

Stern College stands for a great ideal. It is a private college of arts and sciences which endeavors to create a congenial home atmosphere with a particularly Jewish environment. As a new college it has the opportunity to avail itself of the educational trends of the leading colleges for women in the United States. It will thus endeavor to formulate a balanced curriculum with particular emphasis on the humanities. It is above all the only college in the world under Jewish auspices where the sacred heritage of Judaism and our contemporary culture will be integrated and our American way of life will supplement and complement each other; Torah learning, Jewish history and philosophy will walk hand in hand with the knowledge of the arts and the sciences. We will endeavor to provide for you the facilities for extra-curricular activities in accordance with standard college practices. I do hope that you will avail yourself fully of the opportunities which we will offer you.

Wishing you all a pleasant summer, I remain

Cordially yours,

SAMUEL BELKIN

President



TO THE STUDENT BODY OF STERN COLLEGE:

It is indeed a genuine source of satisfaction for me to greet the first class of Stern College in the first issue of the student publication. I am happy to witness the realization of a great educational project which was always close to my heart.

There is no doubt in my mind that in the near future hundreds of students from all parts of the world will flock to this college, because this is the only college for women under Jewish auspices which will offer a broad liberal education in harmony with our cultural and religious heritage.

You, the members of the first class, will forever have the singular privilege of belonging to the pioneering group with whom this institution began its academic program.

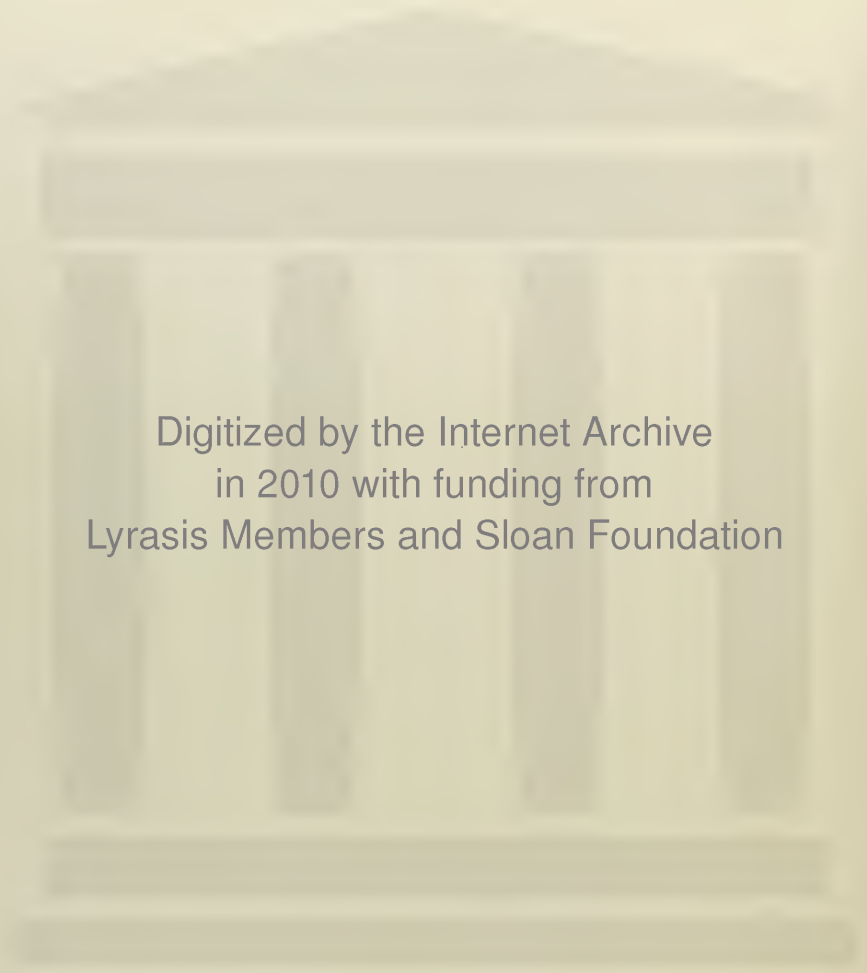
I am confident that Stern College will train a generation of young women fortified by the firm faith of our sacred heritage and strengthened by the knowledge of the arts and sciences.

I can assure you that I will continue to dedicate my energies to work together with Dr. Belkin in making the Stern College one of the first institutions of higher learning in our country.

May I also extend my best wishes to you for a pleasant summer.

Sincerely yours,

MAX STERN



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NEWS



IN RETROSPECT 1954-55

Vol. 1

No. 1

Stern College For Women Opens!

Mr. Max Stern Guest at Welcoming Assembly

On September 13, 1954, the day before the first day of school, Stern College had its first assembly. The purpose of the gathering was to introduce the girls to each other and the school.

Each girl rose, introduced herself, named her home town, and the school from which she graduated.

Dr. Samuel Belkin, President of the University, opened the assembly with a speech in which he welcomed the girls to Stern College. He also outlined the ideals and aims of the college.

Mrs. Cecile Feder, the registrar, next took the speaker's platform. She enlightened the girls on many facts concerning the school.

The guests of honor were Mr. and Mrs. Max Stern and their daughter, Gloria. Mr. Stern, through whose initial gift of \$500,000 this college was established, addressed the students. He then extended an invitation to all the girls to come to his home that *Shabbos* for *Sbalos Sundos*.

At the close of the program, pictures of the student body were taken with Dr. Belkin, Mr. and Mrs. Stern, and Mrs. Feder.



Windermere Serves as Dorm

On September 8, 1954, the out-of-town students of Stern College for Women moved into their dormitory. The girls live in the Hotel Windermere, located on 92nd Street and West End Avenue, one of the finest hotels on New York's West Side. Here they are in a fine Jewish neighborhood, with several orthodox synagogues nearby and a kosher restaurant available in the hotel.

There are eleven dormitory girls hailing from all parts of the United States. They are Gilda Kaplon, Bryna Miller, Evelyn Hertzberg, Baltimore; Frieda Gold, Boston; Faith Caplan, Miami Beach; Renah Mescheloff, Chicago; Marcia Merkin, Sylvia Hottenberg, Hartford; Shulamith Poupkou, Ruth Solomon, Yaffe Wachtfogel, Philadelphia. Three girls occupy each of the rooms, which are on the fourth and fifth floors. Dr. Bell, house-mother, who also teaches French and German at the college, lives on the fifth floor with the girls. The rooms are spacious and nicely furnished. The hotel provides maid service. The hotel's reception room and beautiful solarium, as well as other facilities, help to provide a homelike and comfortable dormitory.

Student Body Elects First Officers

On October 27, 1954, the Student Body of Stern College elected Anne Rosenbaum, Sura Schreiber, Pearl Kidansky, and Joan Philipson as president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, respectively, of the newly formed student council.

Miss Rosenbaum, of North Bergen, New Jersey, was active in General Organization at Central Yeshiva High School, was twice elected representative of her class to the General Organization and was President of the Senior Class. She is active in Mizrahi Hatzair and is now serving as Editor-in-chief of "Hamagid", their Junior Publication.



Miss Schreiber, who comes from Newark, New Jersey, won the service award upon graduation from Central Yeshiva High School. She was Vice-President of the General Organization and had previously served as officer of her class.

Pearl Kidansky, also of Newark, is active locally in Mizrahi Hatzair. Miss Kidansky held the office of Secretary of the General Organization in Central. She was awarded a service pin upon her graduation from High School.

Joan Philipson is our only Student Council officer from Brooklyn. She graduated from Samuel J. Tilden High School and Marshalliah Hebrew High School. Joan was a member of Arista and rendered much service to both schools.

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Vol. I

No. 2

Foiled — by Finals!

by DVORA ABRAMSON

From the first moment that we entered Stern College, we observed our actions from the point of view of posterity. We carefully savored each event that occurred, not letting it slip by without notice, but changing every incident into one of historical moment by the magical phrase said in an awed, hushed tone — "The first meal in the dining room, the first exam, the first failure."

Yes, everything that happened was "the first" . . . and we who were "blazing a straight path for those who would follow" were prepared to tackle anything. We have carefully recorded the very moment that the first history professor sat up very straight in his seat, looked directly into 33 pairs of eyes, and shuffling his briefcase a bit uneasily, said quickly, "Meet in the auditorium next Thursday for a written review."

He couldn't fool us, though. We knew what he meant, and we were astonished. (Didn't pioneers get any privileges?) When the "ten to" bell rang, little groups huddled together discussing the thunderbolt. Finally we decided that this was not a case for revolution, and magnanimously elected to discover what the first exam would be like, (we had already been told that only by taking a test can one find out what it is like.)

The next Thursday finally dawned. It rained that day and the weather added its dampness to the spirit of the bleary-eyed girls that stumbled into the elevator clutching their soggy history notes, and finishing the last chapter on Tiberius. Our English teacher offered to take our minds off Pericles and Thucydides and help us relax by explaining to us The Intricate Mysteries of Footnotes and Their Place in a Freshman's First Term Paper as Related to his Final Grades, his College Average and the General Well-Being of his Nervous System.

When we were at last seated in the auditorium, two seats apart (to remove temptation — for we are honorable students) and the exams were handed out, 33 hearts did a horrified somersault. Now that we fondly reminisce, we realize that

Midyear Social Held at Windermere

On January 31, the Stern College Student Body sponsored the second social gathering of the year. The affair took place in the solarium of the Hotel Windermere on 92nd Street.

No admission was charged; however, attendance was by invitation only.

Most of the time was devoted to socialization, with a short program to highlight the evening.

The school choir, under the leadership of Professor Karl Adler, sang several selections. This was followed by a pantomime to the song, "Sisters", executed by Renah Mescheloff and Marcia Merkin.

The Hebrew dance group also performed, with Barbara Gross accompanying on the *chail*. The entire program was under the direction of the chairman, Bryna Miller. Her committee consisted of Beatrice Cyperstein, Barbara Gardner, Evelyn Hertzberg, Debra Stitskin, and Barbara Gross.

we should have known that Isocrates wrote Panegyricus.

This exam soon set the proverbial ball rolling, and each day another teacher embarrassedly announced the date for an examination. They didn't tell us — but we knew. These were midterms.

After a few days things got back to normal. The students stopped mumbling Raschi and Seforno as they walked from class to class, and the teachers stopped having "I hate to do it, but" expressions.

Then the finals were announced and the mumbling began again. The Soncinos began to disappear from the library, and the Bulletin Board was never so popular as when it proclaimed in dainty little letters the days and hours of our examinations. Again little groups huddled together, but again we decided that this was not the time for revolution, for there is much we must learn of life, and we decided that pioneers, such as we, must experience all phases of life and taking 3 finals a day would greatly enrich our store of experiences. (Not to mention the family doctor, the Edison Co. and the

Stern-T.I. Chanukah Celebration a Success

The Stern College social season opened on Sunday night, December 19, 1954, with a Chanukah affair which was co-sponsored by the Teachers' Institute for Women. The gathering took place in the green room of the Hotel Diplomat.

Attendance was by invitation only and a large crowd was on hand to take part in the festivities.

The greater part of the evening was devoted to meeting new people and renewing old acquaintanceships.

An entertainment program, most of which was supplied by the girls of Teachers' Institute, was enjoyable and well done. Stern College was represented in this field by its *chail* group. Helene Gardenberg of T.I. was Mistress of Ceremonies.

The evening was closed with the singing of Hatikva.



No-Doze pill manufacturers.)

There is an end to all things, however, and in the spare moments that we allowed for sleep one lovely thought comforted us—"just think, in twenty-five years we won't even remember this."

The results of the first final examinations of the first class of Stern College were duly recorded. They have ended with no major mishaps, we have not as yet planned a revolution, and we are still on good terms with the faculty.

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DR. BELKIN SPEAKS AT ORIENTATION

Dr. Samuel Belkin, President of the University, paid an informal visit to the Freshman orientation class at one of its first sessions of the Spring term. The purpose of his visit was to answer any questions the students may have had concerning the future curriculum of Stern College.

Some of the answers by Dr. Belkin to questions posed were; sixty-four credits are needed in Hebrew for a Hebrew teacher's diploma; there will be no major in education; athletics will be started next year; we eventually will have a dorm of our own.



Central Comes to Call

On March 31, 1955, Stern College played hostess to the Senior class of Central Yeshiva High School.

Upon arrival, the students and faculty members, who had accompanied them, were ushered into the school auditorium. Here they were broken up into five groups and were taken on a guided tour through the building. Each group was composed of a Student Council member, two members of the Student Body, and twelve of the visiting seniors.

After the tours, the various groups returned to the auditorium at which time Dr. Shelley Saphire, head of Yeshiva University High Schools, Dr. Isaac Lewin, Principal of the Hebrew Department at Central, Rabbi Baruch Faivelson of Stern College and Dr. Samuel Belkin, President of Yeshiva University, each spoke to the girls about the opportunities that Stern College offers. The visit was terminated after the serving of refreshments in the dining room.

Stern Makes Merry at Purim

The first Stern College Purim Celebration took place on Saturday night, March 13, 1955, at the Jewish Center, New York City. Admission to the gathering was by invitation only, although a fee of \$1.00 was charged.

Upon arrival, one could not help but notice the room's arrangement, which was in night club style. The food was appetizingly displayed on a buffet table at a side of the room.

During the early part of the evening, the guests enjoyed mingling with one another, and then took their seats for the planned show of the evening.

Under the direction of the chairman, Renah Mescheloff, a delightful program was presented.

Led by Professor Karl Adler, the school choir gave its rendition of some of our holiday songs. At different points audience participation was stimulated as the guests were asked to join in the singing.

Where there is singing, there is dancing and the next spot on the program was taken over by the Hebrew dance group. The future Pavlovas went gracefully through the many difficult and intricate dance steps.

As an added touch to the all-student program, Mrs. Samuel Belkin, the charming wife of our University president, came to the spotlight to sing Yerushalayim. Anne Rosenbaum, Student Council president, was then called on to introduce our benefactor, Mr. Max Stern. Mr. Stern, in a brief address, made note of the amazing growth and advancement of our college.

Renah Mescheloff and Marcia Merkin next presented a pantomime of the song, "My Baby Don't Love Me No More."

Highlighting the program was a play entitled "South Persia," in which the Pu-

Goal Surpassed in Charity Drive

One of the major projects of the Spring term was a Charity Drive in conjunction with Yeshiva University. The drive was launched on February 7, and extended over a period of ten weeks. A quota of \$82.50 was set by a University Committee. The drive was a success due to the splendid cooperation of the students, and the total intake slightly exceeded the original quota. Chairman of the drive was Audrey Katz.



Choral Group Under Direction of Dr. Adler

The Choral Group, one of the earliest extra-curricular activities organized in Stern College, is under the direction of Dr. Karl Adler, Professor of Music at Yeshiva University.

The group, which consists of eleven girls, meets every Tuesday at noon. The chorus participated in the January 31st social, which was held at the Hotel Windermere, and the Purim affair of March 12. Most of the music taught is Hebraic and Israeli but canons of many famous composers are also studied.

rim story was portrayed in musical form, using the popular South Pacific songs. Both major and minor characters were in true form and very humorous. The end of the play marked the conclusion of the entertainment, and the gathering came to a close about one half hour later.

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Mrs. Isaacs Appointed Student Advisor

Student Advisor Appointed

A very lovely lady has come into our lives. She is Mrs. Elizabeth Isaacs, who has been appointed Student Advisor by Dr. Samuel Belkin, President of Yeshiva University.

At an Orientation meeting on April 26, Mrs. Isaacs was introduced to the Student Body. A graduate of Barnard College, Mrs. Isaacs has been associated with the teaching profession for many years. Our new Student Advisor will be available to the student body for advice and consultation concerning all phases of college and personal life. She will also act as consultant for the Student Council.

Mr. Stern Honored at Mizrahi Dinner

A dinner sponsored by Mizrahi Hatzair was held in the Riverside Plaza Hotel on April 26. This year, on their third anniversary, the Mizrahi Hatzair honored Mr. Max Stern.

Unfortunately, because of illness, Mr. Stern was unable to attend the dinner. Mrs. Stern graciously accepted the plaque awarded to him by the Mizrahi Hatzair, in recognition of his contribution to higher Jewish Education. Mr. Stern's eldest son spoke on behalf of his father in accepting the award.

Other speakers on the program included former Mayor Shlomo Zalman Shragai of Jerusalem, Rabbi Zevi Tabory, Director of the Department of Torah, Culture, and Education in the Diaspora of the Jewish Agency, who gave the invocation, Mrs. Nachman Ebin, national President of Mizrahi Women, Karpol Bender, national President of Mizrahi Hatzair, and Rabbi Max Mordecai Kirshblum, President of Mizrahi Organization of America. Also on the program were Cantor David Kushevitsky, comedian Jerry Cutler, and the Mizrahi Hatzair dance quartet.

Stern College was represented at the

Farewell Gathering Held for Mrs. Feder

A farewell party for Mrs. Cecile S. Feder, Registrar, was held in the cafeteria on Monday afternoon, May 2. Among those present were Dr. Samuel Belkin, President of Yeshiva University, Dr. and Mrs. Feder, members of the faculty, and the student body. The program opened with Ruth Solomon presenting Mrs. Feder with a gift from the student body. Dr. Belkin then presented her with a lovely silver serving bowl with an inscription expressing deep gratitude for her services. Dr. Belkin stated that a good school must have a firm foundation created by capable administrators, and that Mrs. Feder had fulfilled all his expectations. He remarked that her work will continue to have tremendous influence at Stern College.

Mrs. Feder gave her farewell address, declaring that she had tried zealously to guard the uniqueness of Stern College and thanking all those who had cooperatively helped her. She said that she would want a daughter of hers to attend the school.

Dr. Feder then closed the program, bidding the students to go on to better things and higher achievements.

Dr. Bell's Book Published

The first book to be published under the name of Stern College is *Etude sur le Sonnet du Vieil Pelestin* de Philippe de Mezières (1327-1495) by Dr. Dora M. Bell, professor of Modern Languages at Stern College. It appeared in April, 1955.

Dr. Bell attended Western Reserve University and the Sorbonne, where she received a *Diplome de Professeur de français à l'étranger*. At the present time she is working on the completion of another book.

dinner by the Student Council and the editor of "In Retrospect".

Debating Group Under Way

The debating society was organized on April 16, 1955. Mr. Nissan Shulman, graduate of Yeshiva University, and a member of the debating society there in his undergraduate years, was appointed its leader and advisor.

On April 23, 1955, elections were held which resulted in Bryna Miller being elected president, Joanne Peltz vice-president, and Evelyn Hertzberg secretary and campus manager (to arrange debates).

The topic chosen for the first debate was: Resolved, that we should establish a federal board to supervise the equitable distribution of Salk polio vaccine. The debate took place on May 6. Anne Rosenbaum and Pearl Kidansky upheld the



affirmative side and Renah Mescheloff and Faith Caplan advocated state supervision. Some of the main issues discussed were: a) "creeping socialism", b) states rights, c) equitable distribution, d) black market.

The affirmative side was declared the winner by the committee of judges consisting of Audrey Katz, Joanne Peltz, and Sura Schreiber. Mr. Shulman then gave the group pointers on good debating. Since final examinations are coming shortly, the debate was also the last meeting of the society. Mr. Shulman expressed the hope that the Stern College Debating Society would participate in intercollegiate debates next year.

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No. 5

NEXT YEAR'S CURRICULUM ANNOUNCED

The primary interest of Stern College for Women is to provide an integrated program of secular and Hebraic studies. In addition to Hebraic studies on beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels, several new courses offer the student a wide range of choice in majors and electives.

Modern laboratories, with facilities for biology, chemistry, and physics are available for the prescribed year of science. There is also a choice between psychology, advanced mathematics, or a survey of math tailored for those students who have disliked or done poorly in this subject in high school. Courses in the social sciences which are offered this term, such as Political Science and Sociology, will be offered again next term. A choice of two of these subjects is required, besides a language and a course in English Literature. All students who have taken elementary French or German are required to continue the language next year.

Program of Extra Curricular Activities Planned

Extra-curricular activities, some of which were started this year, will be in full swing next year.

Future plans for the debating society include intra-collegiate debates, participation in state and national contests, as well as debates among the members. The choral group, under the direction of Professor Karl Adler, should continue to be a source of entertainment at various school functions. Other clubs which are in the planning stage are: art, dramatics, Hebrew-dancing, *chailil*, and a school newspaper.

An essential part of any curriculum is physical education. The program includes general athletics plus special teams of basketball, tennis, etc. for sports enthusiasts.

The progress made this year combined with the plans for the second year are steps toward the attainment of a leading position for Stern College in the field of higher education.

SCHOOL OPENS MONDAY,
SEPTEMBER 12

REGISTRATION—SEPT. 7, 8, 9
Full details about registration procedure will be sent to each girl during the summer.

New Elections Held at Stern College

On May 6, 1955, the second elections of the Student Body of Stern College were held. The results showed that Anne Rosenbaum and Sura Schreiber were re-elected to their posts of President and Vice-President respectively. Eva Osterreicher was elected secretary and Joanne Peltz, treasurer. These two will replace the outgoing officers, Pearl Kidansky and Joan Philipson. The various speeches of the candidates were heard the previous day, Wednesday, May 5. The election was held by secret ballot and votes counted by outgoing treasurer, Joan Philipson, and Mr. Dan Vogel, acting registrar.



Mrs. Guterman Heads Art Club

The newly formed Art Club held its first meeting in room 12 at 12 o'clock, May 12, 1955, at which time the members worked on designing pages for "In Retrospect".

The advisor, Mrs. Simcon Guterman, wife of the dean of Yeshiva College, attended Maryland Institute of Art and worked in Baltimore as a commercial artist.

Those attending the meeting were: Faye Fichner, Barbara Gardner, Frieda Gold, Renah Meschloff, and Joan Philipson.

Lag B'omer Skating Party a Big Success



With the school term drawing to a close, the Student Council of Stern College sponsored the last social gathering of the freshman year.

The date was May 10, Lag B'Omer. Roller skating was the feature attraction (aside from the girls and food, of course). The setting was Wollman Memorial Skating Rink in Central Park, and the time 2:30 P.M.

Slowly but surely the rink filled up as the Yeshiva speedsters and stuntsters put the Roller Derby performers to shame.

During the course of the day salami sandwiches and pickles were served to the "somewhat hungry crowd".

Cafeteria Seats 125 People

A new, modern, air conditioned dining room occupies the basement of Stern College. It can accommodate approximately 125 people.

There are two fully equipped kitchens, for meat and dairy meals. In addition, there are steam tables and a soda fountain.

The furniture includes tables with pink tops and chrome and black bases, and chairs which are finished in ebony and upholstered in pink. The walls are in matching pink, with the half panelled in blonde wood.

The cafeteria will open in the fall with full service available to the girls.



"Stop, Look . ."



"Silence Geniuses at work?"



"Grin and bear it"



"Eat, drink, and be merry"





BY ANNE ROSENBAUM

One score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new college, conceived in Judaism, and dedicated to the proposition that all young men should be able to study for smicha and attend college classes in the same edifice.

Now we are engaged in a great undertaking, testing whether this college, or any other college so conceived and so dedicated can long endure a co-ed division. We are met on a campus of that college. We have come to designate a portion of that college as a conference room for those who here give of their time so that the Student Council might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot designate, — we cannot dedicate, — we cannot dominate, this college. The brave men, who donated of their time and money, have consecrated Stern College, far beyond our poor power to add or detract. Perhaps the University will little note, nor long remember, what we do here, but it can never forget that we are here. It is for us, the student body, rather to be dedicated here to the started work which they who donated have thus far so nobly begun. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, — that from these honored men we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion, that we here highly resolve that these men shall not have donated in vain — that this college, under Doctor Belkin, shall have a new Student Council and that government of the students, by the students, for the students, shall not vanish from Lexington Avenue.

almost a romance

by EVA DIER

The boat tilted tantalizingly as Amy struggled at the oars. With each stroke her breath came in shorter puffs, but she flung her head back defiantly and fought on. She must not let the girls suspect that their glances at each other and affected giggles, accompanied by deliberate rocking of the boat, disturbed her.

She gazed across the dark green ripples of the lake to the rich, brown, muddy bank and freshly smelling woods beyond, and tried to forget the girls. Other boats glided past filled with couples and trios of her lighthearted classmates. A group of colorful mallards caught Amy's eye, the ducklings swimming noiselessly and obediently in a "V" shape behind their well-rounded mother. She drank in the invigorating air, and felt like pulling rhythmically, healthfully at the oars, when she remembered. Anger welled up within her with the girls. Well she comprehended their motives. She knew they were dying for the attention of the male members of the class. Of course, she also would have loved to. But it was not in her to behave as they did, and she could not forgive them. Why couldn't they be satisfied as she could be, languidly rowing on the calm, mirror lake? No! they must have romance. At least they could have concealed their motive a little better! But they were displaying their most conspicuous behaviour, while Amy sat silent. She wouldn't stoop to such open flirtation. If the boys wanted to come to them, well they would come themselves! But just the same she was embarrassed sitting among them. The girls sensed her mood and just to tease her, swung the boat dangerously to the side. Suddenly Amy was not going to be made a fool of anymore.

"Here, you want to row?" She handed the oars to one of the girls and immediately the boat rode evenly again in a determined search for some object of interest.

Amy lay back absently. For her there was only one such object hidden in the bottom of her heart. The splash of water playing against the boat's sides, the occasional caw-caw of a crow rending the air, the swish of a weeping willow slowly swaying in the breeze fell upon her ear like faraway music. There he rose before her eyes and filled her thoughts: tall, straight, athletic; a bright, fresh,

young face; black eyes that could turn soft and velvety brown when she looked into them — eyes that laughed back into hers; and smooth black hair to match. Whenever Ronnie spoke to her, Amy's temperature rose a couple of degrees. When he smiled to her all over his face, he seemed to be smiling just for her. Amy loved to be with him. They always found something to talk about. The fact that she was different from other girls had interested him in her. He thought her a fine person, but — anything else? Amy wondered. She knew he liked her, but that knowledge alone wasn't enough. Amy longed for a real friendship with him. You couldn't just go up to a boy you liked, however, and ask him to be friends with you. For that reason, the school dance that had just passed turn into a failure for Amy. All the girls in the class had invited outside boys, but she was so taken up with Ronnie that she had asked no one. And he hadn't gone either. Why? Certainly not because he didn't want to. But she could not bring herself to ask *him*. It seemed to her that she'd known him for a lifetime. Her whole life revolved around him. And he didn't know it. Not a bit of it.

Amy woke from her reverie with a start. Now was her chance to let him know, to get out of this dreaming and to translate it into reality. This will be a dream come true, on this lovely lake . . . but now she was interrupted from her resolutions by the outside world. They were heading straight for a collision. Didn't they know how to steer? Amy asked herself, annoyed once more. Or were they doing it purposely? Well, she wouldn't warn them. They could see as well as she could.

Amy helplessly scanned the occupants of the boat as they shot toward it. All that was visible was a broad white back, yet untouched by the mild June sun. Two heads were bending over something intently in the boat. Amy's pulse quickened. One of the heads was unmistakably black and sleek. RONNIE! Her heart spelled it out in loud thumps. Somehow she didn't wish to stop anymore. She wanted passionately to bump into them. Nearer and nearer the boat sped, and Amy, seated in the nose, would be the one to push them off. Her hand would be un-

believably close to Ronnie's. She held her breath, while the world stopped and she waited, conscious only of the tenseness in her ears.

But it was Ronnie who stuck out his hand firmly to ward them off, and then promptly bent his head again, as the girls' boat drew up along-side the boys'. Their unconcealed flirtation was directed to win Ronnie now. None of it, however evoked any response from him. They were acting disgracefully to Amy's mind, under these conditions. For the boys utterly ignored their pointed comments, acting as if they weren't there at all. Amy would have immediately rowed away at such a reception if she could have. But these girls weren't to be outdone so easily. Such tactlessness! Their coy remarks clearly begged Ronnie for an answer. Not a stir from Ronnie's stolid face, though. He remained unruffled.

Amy's heart was playing leap frog within her all the while. She urgently yearned to say something clever. But what? Tell the girls to go off? She fidgeted uneasily, suddenly self-conscious and ashamed of the girls. How could she show Ronnie something of herself?

By now Ronnie evinced impatience. He looked menacingly, first to the right, then

to the left, picked up his oars, and started to row toward the girls.

That was enough. The girls fled like cats from a chasing hound, not because they were afraid, but because they realized it wasn't worth the trouble. No use to flirt with a stone wall. But Amy was burning red inside of her.

She watched like a spectator, as if this were a play in which she had no part. Never had anything seemed so unreal to her. This meeting was everything really. She ought to have said something to impress him here. This was her chance and she had bungled horribly. This was more than a quick smile, or a passing conversation in the halls of school . . .

A deep feeling of loneliness slowly crept through her. Her life was so dull: school, homework, house chores, sleep, girlfriends, gossip, school again, and so on in an endless round. No time for all the things she dreamed of. Where was that excitement she read about in books, saw in the movies? Where the thrills? Would they ever come to her?

And the fast widening expanse of water between the boats reflected its own answer in the gentle lilt of a thousand little waves dancing in the sunlight.

on bodies of water

by RENAH MESCHELOFF

Bodies of water, even like people, are subject to moods, and each mood is dependent on the surroundings, colors, size.

In my home, Miami Beach, the artificial, superficial, hypocritical city of the South, the ocean is real, genuine and it speaks to me of gayness, relaxation, calm. The golden sands reflect the sun whose beams dance on the shore, now blind-bold and now, as a cloudlet passes before the mother light, shy-soft. The ocean roars at the shore and finding it unfrightened, comes to caress its whiteness, bubbling and frothing in joy; soothing, musical to the ear and mind. People walk together and talk together, laughing in the heat; dipping their toes in the cooling water; pushing, splashing, swimming, diving like a school of porpoises; bouncing, bobbing among the rollicking waves.

One summer the family unanimously decided to spend our summer in the Northern countryside. We rented a bungalow in a popular section of Upstate New York and moved in. Being infected with a spirit of adventure, I set out to explore my new surroundings. A green forest stretched out behind our cabin and several entrances to its depths teased me until I could no longer resist entering this "green mansion". My path was carpeted with soft, damp leaves whose continuity was de-

stroyed from time to time by stones, tiny white mushrooms, or the dead branches of trees long since rotted through. I wondered as I spied brightness ahead and was pleased to see a small lake coming into view. It was wild, exotic looking with vines hanging across the clearing, here and there even dropping into the water. Spiders wove delicate blankets of lace, or devoured gnats that were caught in them. Water ougs skated across the dark, stagnant water or admired their reflections in its surface. Bees kissed the virgin water lillies or flirted with brilliant red buds on the bank. Leaves floated along, were slowly saturated, and sank. I watched this graceful play from my vantage point on the bank many times after that day, charmed by the exotic atmosphere, unconscious of the biting insects, usually alone and relishing my aloneness. The summer ended, and I said good-bye to my quiet cove.

Summers came and summers went, until one year my parents felt that my brothers and I were ready to attend a summer camp. There I met a counselor who had a car that he would let me borrow from time to time; I took advantage of the opportunity. One wet, foggy day I was riding up to the top of Big Mount Pocono on a seldom used road when I saw a sight unforgettable. I stopped and left the car, for the dark, moist air blocked my vision. As I stood there, the waves of fog engulfing me, I felt an eerie sensation overcome me. Before me stretched a lake whose limits were shrouded. The water looked like a sheet of steel whose edges had been cut in an irregular, odd pattern and from out of it lazily drifted a mysterious mist. I gazed at the mist dissolving into the heavy air around it and the full beauty of the scene struck me. There was about it the air of sullen fantasie which engulfs Dozmary Pool, in which dwells the Lady of the Lake and her lake maidens. I felt the scene creep into my veins and I knew in my heart that I would return to see it again.

My second visit to the lake revealed a vision of unalloyed magnificence. The day had in it a golden warmth which seemed to enter into everything it touched. The surface of the water was smooth, as if nature had frozen it that it might better serve to mirror the vernal calm which engulfed it. Only the jumping of a frog or the paddling of several ducks disturbed the surface. Surrounding the lake was a swath of lush, velvet green. Much of the lake's warmth and friendliness exuded from that verdant border and without it the lake would have resembled many others in the region. Beyond the grass was a low stone wall intended to keep the waters in their bed when spring floods came. Past the wall was a rustic forest path surrounded, on one side heavily, and on the other side sparsely, by the wild vegetation of our northern country. An atmosphere of inviting friendliness pervaded. How different the same body of water seemed these two times. Oh, how I wanted to return and learn of its other moods. But all too soon the summer was over and I returned home again.

I have grown older — mentally, physically, emotionally. The time arrived for me to leave home to obtain greater maturity and knowledge. I departed and now I am here once again in my beloved North. Even now, when I think of home, one of my first thoughts is of the ocean, turbulent or peaceful in turns, and I try to compensate by going to the Hudson River to watch the sky, the water, the boats on it. The river is wide and a great expanse surrounds it. Whether gray, blue, or green, it is a commercial river and makes no effort to hide the fact. No puny delicacy for it. Everything is big, powerful. The big sightseeing boats carrying gaping tourists: the bigger cargo boats carrying cotton to far off countries; the grand yachts with their rowdy, card-playing, horse-betting owners and their dignified, stiff captains; the gigantic ocean liners, their rails lined with travelers waving adieu to relatives on the piers; the great bridges that span it, all doing homage to the George Washington Bridge. And the sky, like a roof of blue, so very far and high. I feel small and insignificant next to the grandeur that surrounds me; it is a good feeling. I watch the water running, swirling in eddies, but going — going, and I realize that here before me is a symbol of life. Here life develops quickly and there it runs in circles, confused, dizzy. Over there, see, it rights itself again and continues along its normal paths. And so on through eternity.

the sea serpent's own story

BY PEARL KIDANSKY



From the Sea Serpent's eye a tear ran down his foreleg and he brushed it away gently with his right dorsal fin.

"So you do believe me?" he asked.

"Certainly," said the newspaper man. "Why shouldn't I?"

The monster shook his head. "The incorrigible skepticism of the Human Race," he said. "Think of what Christopher Columbus endured before he met Ferdinand and Isabella. Think of what they did to Robert Fulton until he succeeded in sailing his steamboat up the Hudson. Think of Galileo. When I first bobbed up the Scottish lake, it was the same old harsh, unbelieving world that I had met so many times before. The more conservative London newspapers referred to me editorially as extravagant nonsense. Try to think of even nonsense being extravagant in Scotland. You do believe in me, honestly?"

The reporter took out a cigarette and lit it in the blue flame issuing from his companion's nostrils.

"My dear *Lusus Naturae*, nowadays everything is credible. I have written millions of words about new scientific discoveries that would make the hair stand on end. I have written about infinite space curling up into a strictly finite rubber ball. I have described a universe a billion years old, composed of rocks five billion years old. I know all about time which moves backward. After all this, do you imagine it puzzles me to have you show up simultaneously in Scotland, Yucatan, the Shannon River and Bering Strait? Almost any day I expect you to be reported from the Volga River. To what do we owe your latest reappearance on so many fronts at once?"

The Sea Serpent stared straight ahead of him, her, or it.

"Do you know," he declared, "I almost didn't show up at all. I had, to put it quite plainly, grown sick of the same weary round. To what purpose this recurrent parade in the public eye — in 1817, and in 1839, and in 1859, and in 1897, and so on? Like a tireless Business Cycle."

"Why sure," the reporter interrupted. "There was a picture of you in the *New York Times* the other day as seen by a navigating officer in the Caribbean, all dips and curves. You looked exactly like the roller coaster at Coney Island. But pardon me, you were saying."

"I was saying that I grew tired of it all. People were fast ceasing to believe in me and I was beginning to lose credence in myself. After all, my time was spent. I belonged in the ooze of the Eocene, not in the full blaze of the Twentieth century civilization. And then all at once it came to me how foolish I was."

"I remember the moment distinctly," continued the Monster. "I was then swimming off Tasmania, Gibraltar, the south shore of Lake Erie and within sight of bathers on Wakiki Beach. The thought came to me suddenly that I was not obsolete even if I was old. I saw men reviving many customs, practices and beliefs from the past — all the way back from the centuries, from the jungle, from the primeval slime. Here was somebody trying to get back to Robespierre. Here was somebody else trying to get back to the Roman Empire. And on every hand were clubbings and shootings and hangings and decapitations. Children were being taught to laugh at notions like human brotherhood and human freedom, and instead were drilled in gas masks and hand grenades. So I looked around and said to myself, 'Why, I'm not out of date, after all. I belong. I fit in. With so many monstrous things about, why not a Sea Monster?' And here I am."

"How about your plans for the Summer?" asked the reporter.

"Oh, I suppose the usual thing," answered the Monster, turning to depart. "Atlantic City, Cape of Good Hope, Copenhagen, Puget Sound, and Valparaiso. You newspapers ought to make the cable companies give you a flat rate on me."

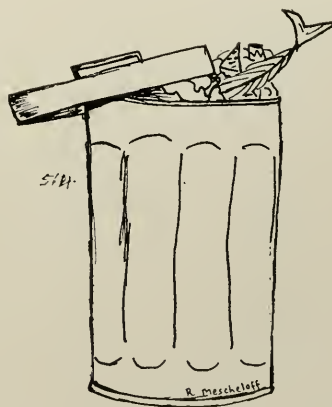
signs of spring

by DVORA ABRAMSON

Even along Fifth Avenue, I try to find the signs of spring. The calendar testifies that it is past the spring equinox, and the nights are shorter than the days, but spring manifests itself in odd ways in the city.

The city knows that it is spring and it prepares itself accordingly. Everything is well ordered and according to rule. The department stores display their new stock of cottons and surround their dummies with green paper. The people also know that it is spring, and they dutifully wear cotton and remark, "What fine weather we're having", or "Spring is here at last!", and the last statement has much truth in it, for many days have passed since March 21.

Spring has chased the hot-chestnuts vendor from the corners of Fifth Avenue, and the people celebrate the changing of the seasons with a black raspberry ice cream cone. The ice cream vendor proclaims spring with bells, and at almost every other corner one may see ice cream wrappings protruding from the tops and sides of the trashcans, and the sound of



the city is the voice of the ice cream bell.

I passed a flower vendor on Fifth Avenue who offered daffodils, a dozen for sixty-five cents and forsythia, a bunch for fifty cents. I thought how beautiful they looked, and how odd it was that here they priced even beauty. This much beauty costs so much, and a different color costs more. But what is beauty? I know that one can find beauty in the arch of a bridge and in the various manifestations of man's brain, but one loses sight of the true value of things when he stares too long at tempered steel. It is easy to see G-d in daffodils, but only one who knows daffodils can see G-d in the frame of a skyscraper. I am glad that I know daffodils.

I often think how wonderful it is that man cannot regulate the seasons, for in the city, everything except the vendor's cut flowers seems to be built to last forever, and when the nights grow shorter one may realize that "forever" is merely a man made term to express the will of G-d.

Spring bares the city, for it is in spring that her weaknesses are revealed. Her chimneys offer warmth in winter, but in spring she offers what? What is spring in the city? What happens when the winds start to play a different, lighter, more musical air — when the evenings are beautiful violin concertos, that quicken the heartbeat and cause the heart to

ache with an undefinable longing for an undefined thing.

Spring is cotton dresses and the ice cream bell. Spring is the green in the shop windows and the fifty cents cut-flowers. The city puts on a good show to mark spring. Fifth Avenue knows how to act — tweed for fall, wool for winter — cotton for spring. It is indescribably sad in spring. I ache to see a tuft of timothy, growing haphazardly among last year's leaves, but if one crumples green crepe paper in a certain way, and spreads it carefully around, it resembles grass — well ordered and according to rule. The city tries so hard to make spring!

"trial and error" chaim weizman

A BOOK REVIEW

BY SYLVIA HOFFENBERG

Jew or Gentile, Zionist or non-Zionist, any reader conscious of the present cosmic struggle to create a future will find Chaim Weizmann's *Trial and Error* worthwhile reading. This autobiography traces the steps by which an insignificant Russian-Jew became one of the world's greatest statesmen.

In 1874 the well-to-do Weizmann family, living in a forlorn corner of White Russia, welcomed another child into their family. Chaim Weizmann, a bright and eager student, began his education at the age of four, in a squalid one room school, equipped with a teacher, numerous children, and the family goat. This the author affectionately calls his "cheder", and to it attributes his sharp intellectual powers. He left his comfortable family at any early age to further his studies in a school of higher education, and began his extensive work in chemistry. After a brilliant college career, he became a teacher and at that point devoted himself most avidly to Zionism. The great Zionist reveals in his life story how he stepped from the ghetto to enlightening education, then on to be a brilliant chemist and teacher, and finally to be one of our greatest humanitarians as President of the State of Israel.

The history of Zionism and the birth of the modern Jewish nation unfold before our eyes in *Trial and Error*. We read about the trials and tribulations and glories and exultation of the struggling nation, and our hearts yearn for the realization of its dreams. This book is a stirring chapter in the life of a race that passed through more vicissitudes than any other people. We live with Israel from its birth, through its struggle for existence, until its glorious realization and maturity.

Without a doubt, *Trial and Error* is the complete and excellent history of Zionism. Weizmann leaves nothing out in his account and provides thorough yet concise information. The pages are crammed with the names, dates, and places that played an important part in the birth of the nation. Vivid glimpses of great persons and historical data comprise most of the book. In fact, the world's political greats such as Herzl, Zangwill and Rothschild take precedence over Weizmann himself, and our author is lost in the background of his autobiography. His modesty is outstanding and, speaking very little about his own great accomplishments, he lets his achievements speak for themselves. Perhaps the book would have been more interesting and pleasurable reading, had the author presented more details of his own illustrious career.

The highlights of his own personal life are omitted and the book seems to lack a dimension of depth. We become thoroughly acquainted with the life of the Jewish nation, but remain somewhat ignorant of the personal life of the author. We realize that this was a man of warmth, perception, and sympathy, as well as tenacity and a formidable controversialist, but throughout the book we feel a lack of personal warmth and experience. Weizmann began the book with wonderful wit in describing his boyhood and family, but lost the touch amidst his own enchantment by the story of Zionism.

Trial and Error is dry, detailed, and heavy reading, but it is excellent research material, and should be recommended highly for college and public libraries. It is not the type of book for popular consumption unless interest in the material can outweigh the heavy reading. In comparison with other biographies the book can be criticized severely for its lack of that vital personal touch.

Meyer W. Weisgal, author of *Chaim Weizmann*, wrote a biography that in my estimation outshines Weizmann's own life story. The book shines with vitality, intimacy, and an inner illumination. The author presents Chaim Weizmann in all of his glorious aspects, statesman, scientist, and builder of the Jewish Commonwealth. Weisgal combines a number of essays on Weizmann by various writers that fuse into a biographical portrait of immense distinction and fascination. Rarely does a collection of this nature achieve so high a level of content and expression. Here we see Weizmann more clearly as a personality, while in *Trial and Error* we gain more knowledge of the personality of the Jewish nation. *Chaim Weizmann* is light yet educational reading. *Trial and Error* is deep and factual. The two books are both profitable reading each in its own way.

Who is better equipped to tell the story of Zionism than Israel's first president? Who can give us a fuller account of Israel than the man who devoted himself wholly to its realization? *Trial and Error* may not be appreciated by all. Many may find its pages too detailed for enjoyable reading. But it will nevertheless remain an outstanding book, written by an unforgettable man.

Saadia Gaon's Opposition To Karaism

By JUDITH OCHS

A TERM PAPER

About the middle of the eighth century C. E., there arose a schismatic group in Judaism — the Karaites — which was opposed by contemporary Jewish leaders. The most prominent among these leaders was Saadia ben Joseph (892?-942), Gaon of Sura, and vigorous champion of the Rabbanite cause. Besides his writings on Jewish philosophy and law, Saadia wrote several anti-Karaite treatises which "did much to stem the tide of Karaism."¹

Karaism based itself solely on the literal interpretation of Scripture; it rejected the oral tradition and the talmudical interpretation embodying it.²

Aside from this rejection of the authority of the Talmud, there is no essential difference between Rabbanite and Karaitic theology.³ However this variant belief led to radical differences in religious practice.⁴ For example, Karaites and Rabbanites celebrated the Holy Days on different dates.⁵ It is therefore essential to



bear in mind that "it was always the differences in practice, not in dogma, that sustained divisions in Israel."⁶

Hence, the presence among Jews of a group with revolutionary religious practices could not long remain unchallenged. In the very beginning, the Rabbis had been inclined to ignore the Karaites, and like the ostrich, they put their heads into the ground in the vain hope that the attacker would disappear. Their attitude was that there had been many such heretic groups among the Jews in the past which had disappeared. Surely the same fate lay in store for Karaism.⁷

But their early hopes were not realized. The Karaite movement gained momentum. Soon the rapid spread of Karaism made some action by the Rabbis man-

datory. They began to preach against the sect from the pulpit. Then they excommunicated the Karaites and declared them to be outside the pale of the Jewish religion.⁸

The leaders of the Jewish community, the Geonim, did not, however, carry on an organized offensive to avert the Karaite danger.⁹ We do know of two of them who combatted Karaism before Saadia: Nitronoi ben Hillel and Hai ben David.¹⁰

However, we see from the history of the time that the early Rabbanite offensives failed. For during the early part of the ninth and tenth centuries, the Karaites put forth an intensive missionary effort and gained many new adherents. The sect spread its tentacles from Babylonia and Judea to Egypt, Syria, and the Crimea.¹¹ Despite the Rabbanite counter-offensive, it penetrated the Rabbinic strongholds and even "found a way into the halls of learning," the Academies.¹²

The Rabbis had failed to check Karaite expansion because their method of attack was ineffective. They did not put to use whatever knowledge of the Hebrew language they had.¹³ Also, as proof for their arguments, they cited mainly the very Talmud whose authority the Karaites denied.¹⁴

In contrast to this ineffective opposition are the polemics of Saadia, the first Rabbi able to match the Karaites with their own weapons. The Karaites had always prided themselves on their superior knowledge of Hebrew and had claimed "that if the Talmudists knew Hebrew as well as they [the Karaites] did, they would never have placed such constructions on the Bible."¹⁵ Now, for the first time there was a Rabbanite leader who could answer their taunts, for Saadia "completely eclipsed them in Hebrew philology and in the interpretation of the Bible."¹⁶ He wrote a commentary on the Torah and also "translated the Bible into Arabic, the language then understood from the extreme west to India."¹⁷ *Agron* is a Hebrew dictionary that Saadia compiled, and is again evidence of his familiarity with, and knowledge of Hebrew.¹⁸ His command of the language "is also evinced by his religious poetry and polemical writings."¹⁹

Saadia put forward an authoritative representation of Rabbanism because he was well-versed in Talmudic lore. Indeed the contemporary Jewish leaders relied on his decisions in questions of Halachah.²⁰

In addition to his knowledge of Hebrew studies, Saadia had a thorough acquaintance with secular wisdom — the

sciences and philosophy. This was fortunate because "it was not sufficient to fight against them [the Karaites] with weapons of the Torah alone."²¹

What prompted a Saadia — a man of such high qualifications, a foremost scholar in Hebrew and secular subjects — to center his attention on opposition to Karaism? To Saadia, opposing the Karaites was far more significant than merely arguing with dissenters. He did not view the Karaite-Rabbanite polemics as a stimulating intellectual exercise, a college debate; he went to the core of the problem. He believed that "the Karaites were not just harmless deviators to be mildly chided for their error, but complete apostates," and consequently "peaceful intercourse between orthodox Rabbanites and Karaite Schismatics appeared to him to be an intolerable and dangerous thing."²²

"Mere text, Saadia held, was not enough; for the correct understanding of the Torah, and one had to go behind the verbal text to get at the spirit and the meaning of the law . . . This could not be done without calling on the unbroken tradition handed down from generation to generation and recorded in the Talmud."²³

Without the oral tradition to guide them, the Karaites had arrived at absurdities in the construing of certain laws. Saadia cites as an example the Karaite Sabbath observances.²⁴ They had interpreted the Biblical injunction against lighting a fire on the Sabbath to mean that it was forbidden to use even a fire kindled on the eve of the Sabbath, and they spent the Sabbath in complete darkness.²⁵

Above all, Saadia wanted the Jews to be united under traditional religious leadership, and he feared that the rapid expansion of Karaism would undermine Jewish unity.²⁷ The Karaite menace was most obvious especially at this time.

"Karaism had within a century and a half become deeply rooted, while Rab Academies of Babylonia, had begun to lose their importance, was in peril of being overwhelmed by the propaganda of the Karaites . . ."²⁸

Indeed the sect was active in missionary work and had attracted many Jews to its beliefs.²⁹ Saadia therefore bemoaned the lack of a clear presentation of the orthodox standpoint. In the preface to his philosophical work, the *Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, he wrote:

"My heart sickens to see that the belief of my co-religionists is impure and their theological views are confused."³⁰

Accordingly, early and late in life,

Saadia fought the Karaites with written polemics. "The pen is mightier than the sword."³¹

Unfortunately, most of Saadia's direct anti-Karaite writings have been lost and we know of their content only from references in the works of his opponents.³² As early as 915, in his twenty-third year, Saadia wrote a polemical essay against Anan, the alleged founder of the Karaite movement.³³ Eleven years later, he wrote "his most comprehensive work against the Karaites," the *Book of Distinction*. From the few passages that were not lost, we see, according to Poznanski, that Saadia discussed in this book all points of divergence. It was written in a calm tone, one of defence rather than of attack.³⁴ Saadia wrote three more direct anti-Karaite works: a book against Ibn Saqaveih, the *Book of Refutation of the Attacking Writer*, and a work against Ben Zuta. In these books, he refutes the contentions of the Karaite leaders and discusses the calendar and anthropomorphism.³⁵

Saadia also opposed Karaism indirectly in many of his other works, for "anti-Karaite and generally anti-sectarian activity was focal in Saadia's whole attitude to life, and it found expression even in remote corners of his scholarly activity."³⁶ From the works of Solomon Ben Yeruhah, the Karaite, it appears that in his commentary on the Torah, Saadia listed arguments in proof of the need of the Mishna.³⁷ His Arabic translation of the Bible has a marked anti-Karaite tendency. P. R. Weis states that "an inquiry into the paraphrases of the Gaon's version not only reveals that they stand in opposition to views known to have been held by the Karaites, but also shows that they correspond to the very arguments... advanced by the Gaon."³⁸ To this translation, Saadia also added notes to counteract the Karaite influence.³⁹

Saadia compiled a Siddur in which he omitted the words "and a new light shall shine on Zion" from the blessing on light. Some scholars believe he did this in order to combat those Karaites who had emigrated to Jerusalem.⁴⁰ Apparently this is an erroneous interpretation for Saadia himself gives a different reason — that mention of the "new light of the future" is anomalous in the blessing on everyday light.⁴¹ Nevertheless, this Siddur was of importance in the fight against Karaism. It acquainted all Jews with the traditional prayers, which then had been replaced by recitation of the Psalms.⁴²

Saadia used every opportunity to strike against the Karaites. Even in his philo-

sophical work, there is an allusion to Karaism: "Whoever does not believe in... the truthfulness of the transmitters of tradition will not be rewarded in the world to come, even though he is righteous in all other respects."⁴³

Saadia's writings have influenced many future polemics between the Rabbanites and the Karaites and — what is important — have had a decisive effect on the development of Karaism. In their writings, the Rabbis drew their weapons "from the arsenal of the Gaon's polemics."⁴⁴ To take just one example, Rabbi Jacob Ben Samuel carried on the fight against Karaism in Saadia's manner.⁴⁵ Also the Karaite writings centered around Saadia. Till the nineteenth century they attacked him in their books. From Ben Zuta and Ibn Saqaveih⁴⁶ to Solomon Ben Luzki and Abraham Firkowisch⁴⁷ they all "levelled their shafts at the redoubtable master-controversialist, whose very name they held in execration." And his work was the shield against which their lances broke.⁴⁸

In order to answer Saadia effectively, the Karaites had to resolve the differences among themselves⁴⁹ — differences that had resulted from their unlimited freedom in exegesis.⁵⁰ Their answers to Saadia had to be on a higher literary and scholastic plane than heretofore. Karaite leaders, such as Sahl ben Masliah and Solomon ben Yeruhah replied to Saadia in Arabic and Hebrew. These answers produced the Golden Age of Karaite Literature.⁵¹ "But a literature cannot live on the chewing of old opinions and on controversy, and nothing more, especially when these are not even fertilized by new thoughts. Thus it is that Karaite literature vanished silently."⁵²

Similarly, the blow Saadia dealt the Karaite expansion was decisive and sealed the fate of the sect. It was "cut off completely from the main stream of Jewish thought and social progress."⁵³ This complete break closed the only missionary field open to Karaism.⁵⁴ Its numbers dwindled from that time until only an insignificant group remained. In time, "it broke away entirely from the main body of Israel."⁵⁵

As regards Saadia's achievements, the facts speak for themselves. Karaism did not recover from his attack and was never again a danger to Israel. Saadia had curbed one of the strongest heretic movements that ever arose in Judaism.⁵⁶

Saadia's contemporaries recognized his accomplishments and he partly owed his appointment as Gaon at Sura to his anti-Karaite activities.⁵⁷ Later Rabbis such as

Moses de Rieti⁵⁸ and Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra paid tribute to Saadia's work in this field. Ibn Ezra wrote, "May the Lord double the reward of the Gaon who gave complete answers to the Sadducees, [the Karaites were often referred to as Sadducees] who forbid the light on the Sabbath."⁵⁹

From Saadia's strong opposition to Karaism, he emerges, above all, as a man of insight who recognized the necessity of maintaining Jewish unity. In the words of Ibn Daud, "He gave answers to the heretics and those who deny the Law" and thus "did great deeds for Israel."⁶⁰

NOTES

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- ⁴Bernard Revel, *The Karaite Halakah and its Relation to Sadducean, Samaritan and Philonion Halakah* (Philadelphia, 1913), p. 3
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- ³²Poznanski, "Anti-Karaite Writings," p. 261
- ³³*Ibid.*, p. 240
- ³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 252
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- ³⁷Halkin, p. 137
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- ³⁹Zeitlin pp. 286-7, note 103
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